

Your County, Your Government

It Can Happen Here



Fact Sheet #12
January 16, 2009

Sheltering-in-Place

Santa Rosa County has been extremely fortunate with the incidents that have affected our county in just the first few weeks of 2009. While the CSX train derailment, downtown Milton fire and private plane crash have been financially devastating, all three events caused no injuries or deaths. Our county was also very fortunate that no hazardous materials were involved. Recent events should be a frank reminder to all that it can, and does happen here, and to insure the safety of you and your loved ones, it is vital to learn what safety measures need to be taken before it happens. This is extremely important in the case of hazardous material incidents and knowing how to properly shelter-in-place.

What does it mean to Shelter-in-Place?

In an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere, emergency officials may issue a call for citizens in the affected area to "shelter-in-place." Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. Instructions to shelter-in-place are usually provided for durations of a few hours, not days or weeks. If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow the instructions below.

What will you need?

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally or intentionally into the environment. Should this occur, information will be provided by local authorities on television and radio stations on how to protect you and your family. The most important action for you to take is to follow the instructions of local authorities and know what to do if they advise you to shelter-in-place, before an incident occurs.

SHELTER SUPPLY KIT

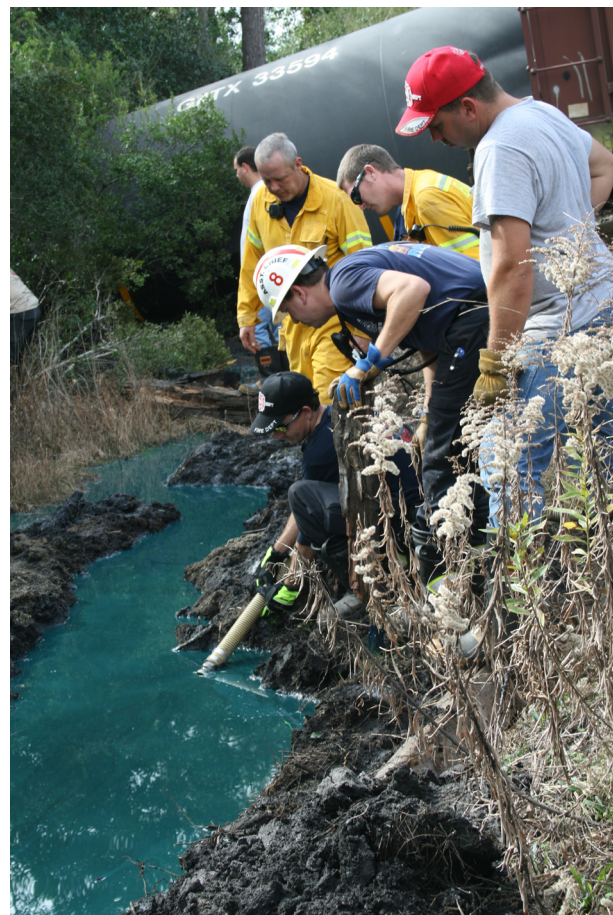
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Radio (battery)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Snack food</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Clock (battery)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Blankets</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Bottled water</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Bath towels</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Flashlight</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Duct tape</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>First-aid supplies</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Plastic sheeting</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Extra batteries</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pet Supplies, i.e. food, water etc.</i> |

Local officials on the scene are the best source of information for your particular situation, and will provide the necessary steps you need to take via the local media. Following their instructions during and after emergencies regarding sheltering, food, water, and clean up methods is vital to the safety of you and your family.



Above: A CSX train derailed in Santa Rosa County on January 3.

Below: Fire fighters work to clean up an oil spill at the CSX train derailment site. Fortunately, the spill was nonhazardous.



How to Shelter-in-Place

At Home:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- Close window shades, blinds, or curtains, to protect eyes in case of danger of explosion.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems and close fireplace damper.
- Go to an interior room with the fewest windows. Take your pets with you.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency. Use your phone for emergencies only!
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks around the door, windows and any vents into the room.
- Use wet towel to seal the crack at the bottom of exterior doors.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe.
- Once the all clear has been announced, open up all windows and turn on the air system. Go outside and let your house ventilate for at least 30 minutes.

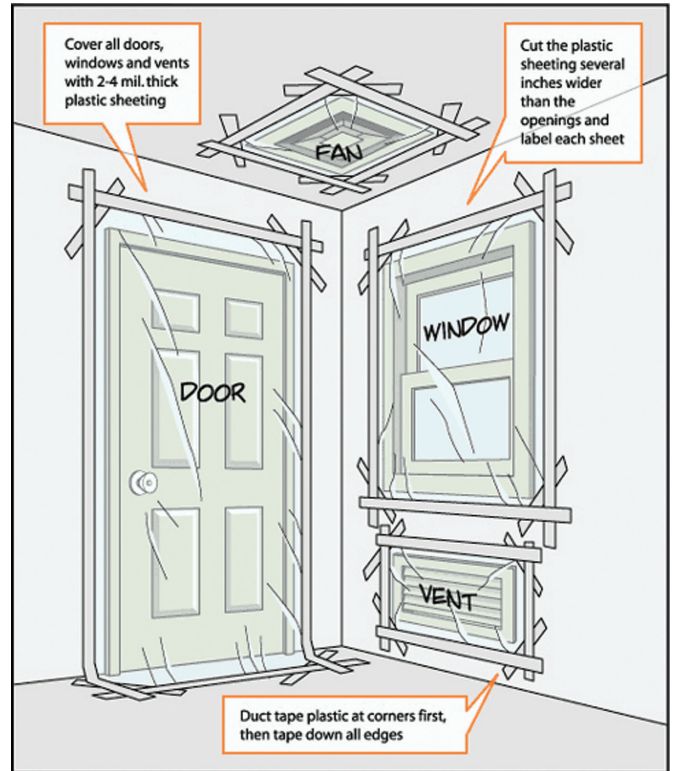
At Work:

- Close the business. Bring everyone into the designated shelter-in-place area(s). Shut and lock the door(s).
- Close and lock all windows, exterior doors, and any other openings to the outside.
- Make sure your employees are familiar with your building's mechanical systems including how to turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air - these systems, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed, or disabled.
- Your shelter-in-place areas should be interior room(s) above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit in. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if possible. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, copy and conference rooms without exterior windows will work well.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency. Use phone for emergency only!
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks around the door(s), window(s) and any vent(s) into the room.
- Write down the names of everyone in the room and their affiliation with your business (employee, visitor, client, and customers.)
- Keep listening to the radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

In Your Vehicle:

If you are driving a vehicle and hear advice to "shelter-in-place" on the radio, take these steps:

- If you are very close to home, your office, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside. Follow the shelter-in-place recommendations for the place you pick described above.
- If you are unable to get to a home or building quickly and safely, then pull over to the side of the road. Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny outside, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot, to avoid being overheated.
- Turn off the engine.
- Close windows and vents.
- If possible, seal the heating/air conditioning vents with duct tape.
- Listen to the radio regularly for updated advice and instructions.
- Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.



**Subscribe to receive new issues automatically or to view the
"Your County, Your Government" fact sheet series,
visit www.santarosa.fl.gov.
A hard copy can also be obtained by calling (850) 983-1877.**